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HR 151 and HCR 36
REQUESTING DESIGNATION OF OAHU AS A GROUNDWATER AREA

Statement for
House Committee on Water, Land Use Development and Hawaiian Homes
Public Hearing 8 March 1978

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HR 151 and HCR 36 would request that the Board of Land and Natural Resources designate the entire island of Oahu as a groundwater area for the purposes of regulating groundwater development and use under the provisions of HRS Chapter 177. This statement on the resolution does not reflect an institutional position of the University.

There is no question that there are problems with groundwater supplies on Oahu. However, there is considerable confusion as to the nature and present severity of the problems and the imminence of the time when they might become much more severe. This confusion has led the Governor to establish a special State Water Commission which, presumably within the next year, will report its findings.

The emergency regulatory provisions of HRS Chapter 177 were designated many years ago, and have not been invoked by the special designation of any groundwater area. It is very doubtful that special designation would be legitimate under the provisions of that Chapter in the case of a few groundwater areas of northwest Oahu. There is no imminent threat of overdraft, for example, in the groundwater area at Kahuku or those near Waialua. With respect to other groundwater areas the Water Commission may consider the provisions to be overprotective, appropriate, or underprotective. A resolution is not needed for the provisions of HRS 177 to be invoked.

One of the resolutions in question may, however, be useful in indicating to the State administration, the administration and Council of the City and County of Honolulu, and to the developers and users of water on Oahu, the concern of the Legislature with the confusing status of water resource adequacy on this island.